

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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TAGS: PINS, PINT, EINV, UK, EI

SUBJECT: ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS ACCUSED OF INDUSTRIAL
SABOTAGE.

REF: DUBLIN 1855

1. JOHN HUME, DEPUTY LEADER OF NORTHERN IRELAND'S MOST REPRESENTATIVE CATHOLIC PARTY (SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOR PARTY) OVER THE WEEKEND STRONGLY CRITICIZED A REPORTED ATTEMPT BY THE AMERICAN ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS TO DISCOURAGE U.S. INVESTMENT IN NI. HUME ACCUSED SOME AOH LEADERS OF SYMPATHIZING WITH THE PROVISIONAL IRA, AND OF BELIEVING MISGUIDEDLY THAT 'IF THERE IS NO INVESTMENT (IN NI) SOMEHOW IT WILL BRING ABOUT POLITICAL CHANGES'. ON THE CONTRARY, STOPPAGE OF INVESTMENT WILL 'PROLONG THE AGONY' IN NI, AND IT WOULD NOT HELP HUMAN RIGHTS. HUME SAID THE NATIONAL BOARD OF AOH'S FREEDOM FOR ALL-IRELAND COMMITTEE BEGAN LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN TO LARGE U.S. COMPANIES IN APRIL. IN ADDITION, THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF IRISH AMERICANS, WROTE A COMPANY PLANNING TO INVEST IN NI THAT PLANT AND EXECUTIVE PERSONNEL MIGHT BE ENDANGERED
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BY PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS.

2. HUME WAS BACKED BY SDLP LEADER MP GERRY FITT AND TRADE UNION LEADER PADDY DEVLIN, WHO CALLED THE AOH A 'MOST REPREHENSIBLE CROWD.' A LEADING BELFAST OFFICIAL UNIONIST COMPLIMENTED HUME ON HIS STATEMENT.

3. COMMENT: THE CONCERN EXPRESSED IN REFTTEL MIGHT SEEM SIMILAR TO THAT REPORTEDLY HIGHLIGHTED IN THE 'AOH-NATIONAL COUNCIL 'CAMPAIGN'. BUT THE LATTER EFFORT IS APPARENTLY INTENDED TO DISCOURAGE U S INVESTMENT, AND SOME OF THE LANGUAGE QUOTED MIGHT EVEN BE TAKEN AS AN ATTEMPT TO ENCOURAGE ATTACK.

4. JUDGING FROM MEDIA REPORTING, THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE DISCOURAGEMENT OF U S INVESTMENT IS THE INVESTMENTS ALLEGED DISCRIMINATORY PLACE I.E. PLANTS ARE BUILT WHERE THEY WILL ATTRACT PROTESTANT WORK FORCE. WE BELIEVE THAT U S COMPANIES LOOK CAREFULLY AT THE OBJECTIVE FACTORS THAT AFFECT PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS HERE, BUT DOUBT THAT A CASE CAN BE MADE OF DISCRIMINATION IN SITE SELECTION OR HIRING POLICY.

5. HUME'S STATEMENTS OFTEN ARE CRITICIZED BY LOYALISTS, BUT THIS ONE GOES DOWN WELL. COINCIDENTALLY OVER THE WEEKEND, THREE SDLP MEMBERS OF THE BELFAST CITY COUNCIL FOR THE FIRST TIME ATTENDED AN ANNUAL CIVIC COMMEMORATION OF THE 1916 BATTLE OF THE SOMME, WHEN SEVERAL DAYS OF ATTACKS EFFECTIVELY DESTROYED THE ULSTER DIVISION. THE COMMEMORATION TRADITIONALLY HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROTESTANTS' LOYALTY TO THE CROWN, AND AS SUCH CONTRIBUTE TO THE 'TRIBAL' DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MAJORITY AND MINORITY. SDLP ATTENDANCE THIS YEAR IS NOT IMPORTANT BUT MAY BE TAKEN AS A USEFUL SMALL SIGN. STOUT
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